

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 9681

FOR AF - EDMONDSON FROM WISNER

E.OO. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR RH UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIA CONFERENCE: ZIPA FINDS A HOME

1. SUMMARY: THE ARRIVAL ON DECEMBER 1 OF ZIPA'S NINE-MAN CONTINGENT IN GENEVA HAS SO FAR CAUSED NONE OF THE FIREWORKS MANY HAD PREDICTED. ON THE SURFACE, AT LEAST, THERE IS NO SIGN THAT THE CONTINGENT POSES AN IMMINENT THREAT TO MUGABE'S TENUOUS LEADERSHIP, AND MUGABE'S DEMEANOR SINCE ZIPA'S ARRIVAL HAS IF ANYTHING BECOME MORE RELAXED. NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS EVIDENCE OF PERSISTENT AND DEEP DIVISIONS WITHIN ZANU/ZIPA RANKS WHICH COULD SURFACE IN ANY NUMBER OF DISRUPTIVE WAYS BEFORE THE CONFERENCE IS OVER. END SUMMARY.

2. ZIPA'S NINE-MEMBER ADDITION TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE INCLUDES FOUR FIGURES OF OLD ZANU AND ZANU LIBERATION ARMY (ZANLA) RECENTLY RELEASED FROM DETENTION IN ZAMBIA; DEFENSE CHIEF JOSIAH TONGOGARA, DEPUTY PRESIDENT HENRY HAMADZIRIPI, SOCIAL WELFARE SECRETARY KUMIRAYI KANGAI, AND PROVINCIAL COMMANDER JOSEPH CIMURENGA. TOGETHER WITH INFORMATION SECRETARY RUGARE GUMBO AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECRETARY MURUDZEI MUDZI WHO
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WERE ALREADY HERE, THERE ARE SIX FORMER ZAMBIAN DETAINEES NOW IN GENEVA. THE REMAINING FIVE ADDITIONS ARE ALL MEMBERS OF SO-CALLED ZIPA HIGH COMMAND, MOST OF WHOM ALSO ASSOCIATED WITH ZANLA: COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SOLOMON MUTUSWA (REX NHONGO); DEPUTY POLITICAL COMMISSARY DZINACHE MACHINGURA; DIRECTOR OF MILITARY OPERATIONS ELIAS HONDO; FINANCE DIRECTOR AKIM MUDENDA; AND MEDICAL AFFAIRS DEPUTY TENDAI PHEPHERERE.

3. SINCE THEIR ARRIVAL, THEY HAVE GIVEN EVERY INDICATION OF BEING PART OF AND INTENDING TO REMAIN IN MUGABE'S CAMP. A HAVE MOVED IN WITH MUGABE'S DELEGATION AT THE HOTEL ROYAL. MOREOVER, ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP -- USUALLY TONGOGARA AND MUTUSWA, BUT OCCASIONALLY HAMADZIRIPI -- HAVE ACCOMPANIED MUGABE TO EACH OF THE CONFERENCE WORKING SESSIONS SINCE THEIR ARRIVAL. ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE ALLOWED MUGABE TO DO ALL OF THE SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE DELEGATION, THEY DO CONSULT WITH HIM PRIVATELY DURING THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSIONS.

4. WHILE THERE IS LINGERING CONCERN AMONG SOME FRONT LINE OBSERVERS, MOST NOTABLY BOTSWANA'S ARCHIE MOGWE, THAT ZIPA MAY DISRUPT THE NEGOTIATIONS BY BECOMING OBSTREPEROUS, MOST NOW REGARD ZIPA'S PRESENCE HERE AS ESSENTIAL TO THE CONTINUED PROGRESS OF THE CONFERENCE. ZAMBIAN OBSERVER MARK CHONA TOLD US THAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO PAY THE ZIPA CONTINGENT'S TRAVEL EXPENSES TO GENEVA WAS BOTH A RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ZIPA'S PRESENCE HERE AND A DEMONSTRATION OF ZAMBIA'S WISH TO SEE THE CONFERENCE SUCCEED. NKOMO TOLD ASSISTANT SECRETARY REINHARDT THAT HE REGARDS ZIPA'S PRESENCE AS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT INASMUCH AS MUGABE NO LONGER HAS TO FEAR BEING UNDERCUT BY ZIPA'S ACTIVITIES AND STATEMENTS FROM HOME. NKOMO HOPES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ZIPA'S PRESENCE TO RESUME PRO-GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS ON COORDINATING THE ACTIVITIES OF ZAPU AND ZANU FORCES. HE, LIKE CHONA, BELIEVES THAT MORE CONTROL AND DISCIPLINE CAN BE IMPOSED ON ZIPA NOW THAT ITS LEADERS ARE HERE.

5. THIS POSITIVE VIEW HAS THUS FAR BEEN BORNE OUT BY
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IVOR RICHARD AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH TEAM, WHO DESCRIBE MUGABE AS BEING MUCH MORE RELAXED AND CONFIDENT SINCE ZIPA'S ARRIVAL. THE BRITISH SPECULATE THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S DECISION TO COMPROMISE ON THE INDEPENDENCE DATE ISSUE, WHICH MUGABE IS BELIEVED TO HAVE FAVORED# MAY ALSO HAVE STRENGTHENED MUGABE'S POSITION WITH HIS DELEGATION, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, AND THUS

CONTRIBUTED TO HIS MORE RELAXED DEMEANOR.

6. DESPITE THE FACT THAT DIRE PREDICTIONS OF A MUGABE-ZIPA SHOWDOWN HAVE NOT COME TO PASS, THE PERSISTENTLY RUMORED DIVISIONS WITHIN THE ZANU/SIPA CAMP ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE HEALED SOON, IF AT ALL. ACCORDING TO MEMBERS OF NKOMO'S DELEGATION WHO WORK CLOSELY WITH MUGABE, ZANU'S LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS, WHICH WERE THE SUBJECT OF A ZANU MEETING IN LUSAKA JUST PRIOR TO THE CONVENING OF THE CONFERENCE, HAVE NOT YET BEEN SORTED OUT AND ARE LIKELY TO BE RAISED ANEW HERE. SOME KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVERS CLAIM THAT A MAJOR SPLIT IS EMERGING BETWEEN THE OLD ZANLA LEADERSHIP, LED BY TONGOGARA, AND THE NEWER ZIPA GROUP, AND THAT BEYOND THIS DIVISION THERE MAY BE AS MANY AS FIVE BASIC FACTIONS WITHIN ZANU/ZIPA. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, MUGABE'S POSITION SEEMS ANYTHING BUT SECURE. SITHOLE IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE HIS ATTEMPTS TO EXPLOIT ZANU/ZIPA DIVISIONS IN AN EFFORT TO REESTABLISH HIS LEADERSHIP POSITION, AND HIS SUCCESS IS BY NO MEANS RULED OUT.

7. COMMENT: FOR THE MOMENT, ZIPA'S ARRIVAL IS, AS THE ZAMBIANS HAD HOPED, HAVING A CALMING EFFECT ON THE MUGABE DELEGATION. WHILE THE DELEGATION DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE ON THE VERGE OF A BREAKUP, IT REMAINS AN EXTREMELY FRAGILE COALITION. IF AND WHEN CONFERENCE GETS AROUND TO HARD BARGAINING, TENSIONS WITHIN MUGABE'S CAMP ARE CERTAIN TO BE EXACERBATED. EVEN WITH AID OF NKOMO AND FRONT LINE OBSERVERS, MUGABE IS LIKELY TO HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN PRESENTING A UNIFIED ZANU/ZIPA POSITION. CATTO

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